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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ASHGABAT 001135

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STATE FOR SCA/CEN (PERRY)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/01/2016

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: MYRADOVA DAUGHTER THREATENED BY MINISTRY OF
NATIONAL SECURITY

REF: ASHGABAT 1098

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Jennifer L. Brush for reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d).

Summary

11. (C) Maral Myradova, the oldest daughter of deceased journalist Ogulsapar Myradova, was called into a meeting with the Ministry of National Security (MNB) on November 1. During the meeting, she was told that, if the family cut all contacts with the international community and with their uncle in Sofia, Turkmenistan Helsinki Foundation founder Annadurdy Hajyev, the family members' lives could "return to normal." Alternatively, if the contacts continued, their plight would become "worse than their mother's." Maral was also told that none of the family members would be allowed to travel outside of Turkmenistan under any circumstance. Maral and her sister, Sona, came to the embassy afterwards, clearly seeking advice on next steps. A/DCM and emboff outlined their options, including the possibility of seeking to persuade the government to reverse its ban on their departure -- and the possible consequences. Emboffs also urged the two to believe that all their phone calls, especially to their uncle, were bugged. Post told the daughters that no action would be taken on the family's behalf without their direct consent. End Summary.

Maral Meets with MNB

12. (C) Maral Myradova called post at 1130 on November 1 to inform poloff that she had been called in to meet with the MNB. She said she was scared and would call again when the meeting concluded. At 1630, Maral and her sister Sona came to the embassy and reported that the Myradova family was threatened with a fate

"worse than their mother's," if they continued to talk to the international community and Hajyev. However, the "intimidating" MNB officer said, making light of the family's situation, everything would return to "normal" if the family cooperated. When Maral inquired about returning to their former jobs, the MNB officer feigned surprise in learning that they were unemployed, and assured them that he would talk to their former employers to make things right. The MNB officer also advised them that they would not be permitted to depart Turkmenistan under any circumstances.

Next Step for Family: Family Decision

13. (C) Although composed when meeting with Emboffs, Maral and Sona were obviously frightened and were looking for counsel regarding next steps. When they asked whether they should seek advice from their uncle in Sofia, Emboffs did not respond directly, but warned the sisters to expect that the government would eavesdrop on all their phone calls, in particular those to their uncle. When asked what they wanted to do, Maral said that the family wanted to leave Turkmenistan. Emboffs told the sisters that this would be difficult given the government's stated decision to ban their travel outside Turkmenistan. While the

ASHGABAT 00001135 002 OF 002

international community could seek to persuade the government to reverse its travel ban for the family, such an effort would be slow nd without the guarantee of a successful outcome. A/DCM outlined what this would involve, including diplomatic notes on the family's behalf, their case being aided by ambassadors and high-level visitors with Government of Turkmenistan ministers and President Niyazov -- and, probably, increased pressure from the government. When Maral asked which country might receive the family if they sought to depart Turkmenistan, Emboffs said that it was difficult to say, and that, in any case, the first step would be to gain the government's approval for their departure.

14. (C) A/DCM told the daughters that, given the threats they had just received, the embassy would respect any decision they make on next steps. If they wanted the diplomatic community to push for their departure, post would see that this was put on the agenda. However, if they wanted to be left alone, post would wait for them to approach the embassy. Post only asked that any decision they made be communicated directly, in order to avoid misunderstandings. Both daughters said they wanted to think before making a final decision.

Hajyev Complains About U.S. Visit to Myradovas' Apartments

15. (C) U.K. Embassy Deputy Head of Mission Chris Bowden informed Emboff on October 30 that he had received a phone call from Hajyev after the visit of the U.K., U.S. and French representatives to the Myradova sisters' apartments (reftel). Hajyev, who had

precipitated the visit by the U.K. and French diplomats, was angry that the U.S. diplomat participated as an uninvited guest. Hajyev also said that the Myradova sisters would contact Bowden "soon," but no contact was made.

Comment

¶6. (C) The government has just raised the stakes for the surviving members of the Myradova family. Post recognizes the Department's need for information on this case, but reiterates that there are real -- and very unpleasant -- consequences for the family members with unsolicited, and uninvited, attention. With the ball now clearly in the court of the surviving Myradova family members living in Turkmenistan, post urges that any decision they make be respected. End Comment.
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